GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:21
ANSWERED ON:25.07.2006
WTO MEET .
Patel Shri Kishanbhai Vestabhai;Singh Shri Sugrib

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the World Trade Organisation(WTO) Ministerial Meet was held recently;

(b) If so, the details thereof alongwith the issues discussed and the outcome thereof;

(c) The objections raised by India and other member countries on export subsidies in the said Meet;

(d) The further steps taken by the Government to protect the interests of farmers/exporters and service sector in the country;

(e) Whether any next meeting of WTO has been fixed for discussion; and

(f) If so, the details thereof alongwith the stand of the Government?

Answer

MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH)

(a) & (b): An informal meeting of 31 Ministers, including from India, was convened by the Director General, WTO, in Geneva between 29th June and 1st July, 2006. Domestic support and market access in Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) were discussed by th e Ministers. Convergence could not be achieved. A meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee of the WTO was also held on 1st July, 2006 wherein the DG was requested to conduct intensive and wide ranging consultations with a view to facilitating the establishment of modalities in Agriculture and NAMA. These consultations were to be based on the draft texts prepared by the Chairs of the respective negotiating groups. The DG was requested to report back to the TNC as soon as possible. The DG has not yet reported back on his consultations.

(c) to (f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House. STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (c) TO (f) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.21 FOR ANSWER ON 25TH JULY, 2006 REGARDING "WTO MEET"

(c) to (f): At the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference of the WTO it was already agreed to ensure the elimination of all forms of export subsidies by the end of 2013, which would be achieved in a progressive and parallel manner so that a substantial part is realized by the end of the first half of the implementation period. At the recent Ministerial Meeting as well as at the TNC, India and other developing countries stressed the need to have substantial and effective cuts in trade-distorting domestic support of the developed countries. To address India's core concerns and interests, including protecting the interests of farmers, we have formed alliances with like-minded developing countries, which include the G-20 on Agriculture and the G-33 on Special Products and the Special Safeguard Mechanism, and the NAMA-11 on industrial tariffs. Specific and detailed proposals have been made by these Groups in the negotiations. India has also been playing a key role in further strengthening the developing country coalitions by bringing together G-20, G-33, African Group, ACP countries and the LDCs to reinforce each others' position on issues of mutual interest.

A meeting of the G-6 Ministers was held at Geneva on 23rd and 24th July, 2006 and there was no convergence on the core issues of substantial reduction of trade distorting support and other development issues. It has therefore been decided to suspend negotiations.